



ICLEI
Local Governments for Sustainability

Strategic Plan 2004-2009
(The Athens Plan)

As approved by the ICLEI Council
in Athens, Greece on 7 November 2003

Function of the Strategic Plan

Through the Strategic Plan, ICLEI's membership sets the direction for the Association's policies and programs.

According to ICLEI's Charter, the Strategic Plan is adopted by ICLEI's membership at the Council Meeting, which takes place every three years. The Strategic Plan has a six-year scope. It is revised and renewed every three years.

It is the Secretary General's duty to ensure the implementation of the Strategic Plan through annual work programs and budgets, which are to be approved by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee members in each region shall regularly meet with the Secretary General's regional representative(s) for consultation on how they can politically support the regional implementation of the Strategic Plan and annual workplans.

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1. ICLEI – MISSION, VISION, MANDATE

ICLEI (hereafter referred to as the Association) was founded by local governments at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in the year 1990. The launch of the Association took place under the auspices and with the support of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Center for Innovative Diplomacy (CID).

1.1 MISSION STATEMENT

ICLEI's mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global sustainability with special focus on environmental conditions through cumulative local actions. (Article 1.3 ICLEI Charter)

1.2 VISION

We see ICLEI as:

A growing *Association* of local governments dedicated to sustainable development with worldwide presence, which has challenging positions, whose voice is heard, and which is attractive to be a member of, work for and partner with;

A high-energy, flexible *Movement* of local governments working together in networks for performance, supported by campaigns and programs, and strategic alliances;

An effective sustainability and environmental *Agency* demonstrating creativity and excellence both in developing cutting-edge solutions and in program design and execution.

1.3 MANDATE

GENERAL MANDATE

ICLEI's general mandate is to build an active and committed municipal membership of local spheres of government (local and regional governments and authorities, hereafter referred to

as local government) as well as international, regional, national and sub-national local-government associations.

WORK MANDATE

To support its members, ICLEI's work mandate is to:

- (a) mobilize and provide support to local-level initiatives that address specific priority problems of local and global significance;
- (b) help develop and strengthen local capacity and expertise;
- (c) support networking among and exchange of experiences between local governments, especially between developing and industrialized countries;
- (d) work with groups of local governments and partner organizations in order to research, develop, pilot and implement local initiatives for sustainability;
- (e) function as an information clearinghouse, and as a training center, for local sustainable development and environmental policies and programs;
- (f) provide technical support services and consultancy to aid the implementation of local sustainable development and environmental policies and programs;
- (g) evaluate and report on the impacts of local actions;
- (h) develop and exchange environmental knowledge and appropriate environmental technologies;
- (i) promote the role of local government as a necessary innovator and implementer of sustainable development and environmental policy,
- (j) campaign for meaningful policy making authority for, and adequate resourcing of, local governments; and
- (k) raise and dispense funds to fulfil the purposes of the Association.

In order to implement its work mandate, the Association will develop and implement a range of campaigns and programs; research, development and pilot projects; information services; training programs; conferences; technical and consulting services; and facilitate local government networks.

REPRESENTATION MANDATE

ICLEI's representation mandate is to serve as an international representative for its members and campaign participants by providing advocacy before national and international governments, agencies and organizations and multilateral bodies to increase their understanding and support for local sustainable development and environmental protection activities. Through such advocacy, the Association will work to achieve an effective division of responsibilities and resources for sustainable development and environmental protection between the various spheres of government.

(Article 1.4-1.6 ICLEI Charter)

2. ICLEI – THE ASSOCIATION

ICLEI functions as a democratic, international association of local governments. As an association, ICLEI

- provides *membership services*;
- maintains a transparent organizational *governance structure*;
- pursues a balanced *regional development*;
- builds and fosters *alliances, partnerships and cooperation* with relevant organizations that support the implementation of ICLEI's programs;
- carries out *advocacy* on behalf of its municipal members and campaign participants and occasionally local government in general, and links local to international and multilateral policy processes;
- organizes its *operations* effectively;
- manages its *finances* carefully.

2.1 MEMBERSHIP

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI's approach to membership services shall be a balance between being demand driven and pro-actively offering services and opportunities.

ICLEI is an open association and shall welcome any new member that subscribes to ICLEI's mission, vision and mandate. At the same time, the Association shall build networks of performance-oriented local governments dedicated to advancing policies, practices and achievements in all areas of municipal management.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will

- (a) further build and maintain an active and committed membership;
- (b) strengthen its membership base in Latin America; West Africa; Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia; North Africa, Middle East and West Asia; China; Southeast Asia; South Asia;
- (c) further build municipal capacity and political local leadership;
- (d) facilitate and respond effectively to member input, with special emphasis on meeting regional needs;
- (e) facilitate member-to-member exchange through diverse means;
- (f) support, document and recognize member local sustainable development strategies and achievements in key performance areas;
- (g) institute mechanisms through which ICLEI members' and campaign participants' contributions are regularly quantified, aggregated and reported to the global community.

2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall pursue a democratic, transparent and efficient approach to its organizational governance.

ICLEI is committed to continuous improvement through periodic reviews in all areas of its activity, including governing bodies and procedures and routines, especially in the area of strategic planning, policy, and management.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) improve consistency of and between ICLEI's Charter, By-Laws and statutes and governance of its corporations;
- (b) create a network of senior advocates and ambassadors, drawn from past Executive Committee members, the Advisory Committee and friends of the Association, which will become an internationally powerful and influential group.

2.3 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall deliver its services, campaigns and programs to all ICLEI Members, and in all world regions, through the establishment of regional operations that are fully integrated with ICLEI's worldwide governance, strategy and standards of activity. The Association shall direct its attention to regions with a high need of local sustainable development where it is not yet adequately present. The establishment of an operational structure in a region requires that the membership has reached a critical number and that a multi-year, funded program base exists.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) continue developing its operations in Australia/New Zealand, Europe, North America, Japan and Korea;
- (b) consolidate its offices and operations in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia;
- (c) strengthen its program and operational base in West Africa; Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia; North Africa, Middle East and West Asia; China; Southeast Asia; South Asia.

2.4 ALLIANCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall establish strategic alliances and symbiotic partnerships at local, country, regional and international levels, with other organizations that will concretely support the achievement of the ICLEI mission. Such alliance or partnership requires that ICLEI and its partner have defined common aims and objectives, strategy and outcomes, have determined the share of tasks and responsibilities, and have identified resources.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) enter into a symbiotic partnership with the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments and be recognized as the local government agency specialized in sustainable development and the environment;
- (b) maintain and enhance institutional partnerships with other local government associations, national governments, the United Nations, academic institutions, businesses and non-governmental organizations to secure synergy where mandates meet;
- (c) win a range of international, national and local partners who support ICLEI's work and in turn achieve their own missions.

2.5 ADVOCACY

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall serve as an international representative for its members and campaign participants by providing advocacy before national and international governments, agencies and organizations and multilateral bodies as well as to other local government associations to increase their understanding and support for local sustainable development and environmental protection activities.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) serve as Local Government Major Group coordinator at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, Observer at the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and other UN and multilateral bodies;
- (b) provide advocacy in support of its campaigns and programs.

2.6 OPERATIONS

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall develop and maintain effective working structures that allow for both efficiency and flexibility to adapt to a changing policy and funding environment.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI shall:

- (a) develop financially stable World Secretariat, Regional Secretariats and country offices covering all regions of the world, with multi-term funding arrangements, long-term staff and well-resourced host arrangements – and where strong regional activities have become the backbone of ICLEI's achievements;
- (b) develop capacity centers by further developing ICLEI's International Training Centre, and by creating capacity centers operated through ICLEI offices or symbiotic partnerships with academic institutions offering specialized services and additional resources.

2.7 FINANCE

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall develop a diversified financial base in terms of both funding sources and modalities.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) continue exercising solid financial management;
- (b) take up new funding opportunities through Local Action 21 strategies;
- (c) identify new mechanisms of resourcing its campaigns and programs, especially through an endowment fund.

3. ICLEI – THE MOVEMENT

As a *Movement*, ICLEI runs campaigns, programs and projects that promote Local Agenda 21 as a participatory, long-term, strategic planning process to help local governments develop and implement local action programs to address local priority concerns and internationally agreed goals and targets. Following the local government mandate from the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, ICLEI places an emphasis on supporting accelerated implementation of local sustainable development through Local Action 21 strategies.

Local Action 21 was launched at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development Local Government Session in Johannesburg as an implementation-oriented phase of Local Agenda 21 in the post-Johannesburg decade. ICLEI shall offer its members the opportunity of joining pilot projects and receiving support and guidance for their actions to implement their Local Agendas 21 (sustainable development plans & policies) through local specialized agendas and their implementation in selected priority areas:

- Building sustainable communities and cities by addressing key barriers to sustainability such as poverty; injustice, conflict and insecurity; vulnerability to extreme events; and environmental degradation;
- Protecting the global climate and at the same time achieving local benefits;
- Tackling freshwater management problems;
- Establishing principles, policies & practices, mechanisms and tools for unwavering implementation of sustainable development.

ICLEI shall look into how the protection of other global common goods addressed by Local Action 21 such as land/soil and biodiversity can be meaningfully supported and activities resourced.

As a Movement, ICLEI develops and runs a broad range of campaigns and programs that address local sustainability issues while protecting global common goods, and that link local action to internationally agreed goals and targets such as Agenda 21, Rio Conventions, Habitat Agenda, Millenium Development Goals and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

3.1 BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND CITIES

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall capitalize on the Local Agenda 21 approach (participatory sustainable development planning) and assist local authorities to move beyond general sustainable development planning and to apply this approach in tackling areas of priority concern, i.e. to work with their communities and local stakeholders to address the interrelated challenges of poverty; injustice, conflict and insecurity; vulnerability to extreme events; and unhealthy environments.

ICLEI shall contribute research, development & piloting; training & guidance; and evaluation and documentation.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) through the *Resilient Communities & Cities* partnership program launched as a Type 2 Initiative at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, develop and test a methodology and tools, and implement reference pilot cases for the development and implementation of Local Resilience Agendas which address social cohesion and local vulnerability to extreme events;
- (b) through a *Just, Peaceful and Secure Communities & Cities* program, develop and test a methodology and tools, and implement reference pilot cases for the development and implementation of Local Peace and Security Agendas which address local injustice, conflict and insecurity;
- (c) through a *Viable Local Economies* program, develop and test a methodology and tools, implement reference pilot cases for the development and implementation of Local Economy Agendas which address local poverty;
- (d) through an *Eco-Efficient Cities* program, develop and test a methodology and tools, and implement reference pilot cases for the development and implementation of Local Eco-Efficiency Agendas which address local unhealthy environments and unsustainable production and consumption patterns;
- (e) at regional level through its Regional Secretariats and Country Offices, initiate and carry out regional project activities in the above-mentioned program areas that meet the needs and address priority concerns of members in the region.

3.2 PROTECTING GLOBAL COMMON GOODS

3.2.1 CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION™ (CCP) CAMPAIGN

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall continue using its performance-oriented campaign framework and methodology for local governments to develop and implement a local strategic agenda to reduce global warming and air pollution emissions (local climate action plans), with the benefit of improving community livability. Local climate protection plans and policies shall contribute to the protection of the other global common goods upon which people's lives depend (including air, water, soil, biodiversity and health).

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) continue running the worldwide Cities for Climate Protection™ (CCP) Campaign and strengthen the international coordination function;
- (b) launch new national campaigns on all continents;
- (c) identify financing mechanisms and negotiated funding arrangements for local governments participating in the CCP Campaign to support the implementation of greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction activities such as promoting energy efficiency and renewable energies.

3.2.2 WATER CAMPAIGN

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall use its performance-oriented campaign framework and methodology for local governments to develop and implement a local strategic agenda to improve water quality, availability and access.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) expand the Water Campaign to three regions;
- (b) link the methodologies of performance oriented campaigns to sustainable development planning, and create tools and reference pilot cases for the development and implementation of Local Water Agendas;
- (c) maintain and strengthen strategic alliances with associations of professional and the business sector.

3.3 PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

GENERAL STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall support local governments to institute principles, policies and practices, and mechanisms in local governance as well as state-of-the-art systems and tools in municipal management that ensure unwavering implementation of local action programs, effective monitoring and continual improvement of conditions.

ICLEI shall contribute advocacy; research, development & piloting; capacity building networks; and training and guidance.

3.3.1 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall continue promoting Local Agenda 21 as a locally based participatory sustainable development planning process, and further support the LA21 movement, with an emphasis on processes to address key barriers to sustainability and mechanisms to ensure implementation (link to sections 3.1, 3.2 and 4).

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) continue running and cooperating on national and regional Local Agenda 21 programs and sustainable cities campaigns, by facilitating networks and providing guidance and training;
- (b) extend the application of the LA21 self-assessment tool to other regions, and develop a web based LA21 evaluation facility.

3.3.2 SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall design, promote and apply sustainability management mechanisms to function as the heart of “ensuring unwavering implementation” of local sustainable development.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) build on experience to promote Triple Bottom Line reporting to local governments, in particular ICLEI members, and offer related consultancy services;
- (b) promote the *ecoBUDGET*[®] system to local governments worldwide, start its application in developing countries by initiating pilot projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and offer related consultancy services;
- (c) promote Environmental Management Systems (EMS) to local governments worldwide, and carry out pilot projects and training on all continents.
- (d) promote integrated long term planning for community sustainability.

3.3.3 SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall motivate local governments worldwide to advance sustainable production and consumption by directing their procurement budgets and purchasing power to environmentally and socially sound products and services.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) develop the Sustainable Procurement Campaign and expand it to other regions;
- (b) expand the European network of municipal procurement professionals and offer similar networks in other ICLEI world regions;
- (c) provide guidelines, tools and information to ICLEI members;
- (d) promote sustainable procurement to local governments worldwide as a means to implement sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

4. ICLEI - THE AGENCY

As an international *Sustainable Development and Environmental Agency* for local governments, ICLEI provides information services, delivers training, organizes conferences, facilitates networking and city-to-city exchanges, carries out research, development and pilot projects on methodologies and tools, offers technical services and consultancy.

4.1 INFORMATION SERVICES

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall document and transfer the experiences of local communities worldwide in achieving sustainable development in order to build municipal capacity, and to provide information tools to local leaders and managers that will support their efforts towards sustainable development.

ICLEI shall contribute an interactive website, case studies, handbooks and manuals, reports, fact sheets, and periodical publications.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) strengthen its function as clearinghouse for information targeted to members' needs;
- (b) upgrade its publications series and website;
- (c) establish a best practices capacity center function as a partnership project.

4.2 TRAINING, CONFERENCING, NETWORKING AND EXCHANGE

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall strengthen the capacity of elected officials and senior officers within local government and their partners to drive a process of change towards sustainable development, through training, conferencing, networking and exchange services.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) develop and offer a multitude of capacity building and training services especially in support of Local Action 21 strategies, and to develop incentive and commitments frameworks for implementation;
- (b) organize in all regions regular members conferences for capacity building and exchange;
- (c) design and offer innovative e-learning solutions aligning with ICLEI's campaigns and programs;
- (d) further develop the International Training Centre as ICLEI's capacity center for curricula and training methods, in particular its web training facility.

4.3 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & PILOTING

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall continue building its campaigns and programs upon methodologies developed through action research projects and experiences gained through pilot projects.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) foster its research & development capacity across all offices and form interdisciplinary scientific teams for relevant subject areas;
- (b) conceptualize and carry out R&D and pilot projects to support programs and campaigns.

4.4 TECHNICAL SERVICES & CONSULTANCY

STRATEGIC APPROACH

ICLEI shall develop products and services that support the implementation of sustainability goals of local governments, in particular ICLEI members, and that are strongly linked to ICLEI's work mandate. The methodologies, products and services developed will be transferable and supportable across all regions.

GOALS

Throughout the Strategic Plan period, ICLEI will:

- (a) foster its technical services and consultancy capacity across all offices and form a consultants' network that includes affiliated external experts;
- (b) market consultancy services based on its methodologies, instruments and software tools in the fields of energy management, water management, environmental management systems and others.